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ABSTRACT

Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs (PCEN) provides New York State funding for remediation in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies for eligible high school students. During summer 1993, 30,195 students took PCEN-funded summer classes. About two percent were enrolled in Project Outreach, a program for high school dropouts resuming their education and other high-risk students. The program met or exceeded its evaluation objectives. Overall, at least 79 percent of PCEN students with valid data passed at least one course, and 54 percent of those taking a Regents Competency Test passed the test; however, less than 50 percent passed the reading mathematics, and science tests. Fifty-seven percent of students in Project Outreach passed Regents examinations they took, and the passing rates for individual tests for these students were higher than those of other PCEN students. All Project Outreach students who took a Regents writing test passed it. The Office of Educational Research recommends that special attention be focused on increasing the percentage of students who pass Regents examinations in mathematics, reading, and science. Three tables present evaluation findings. (SLD)

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OER Report

Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs
Summer Program 1993

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Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs
Summer Program 1993

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs (P.C.E.N.) provides New York State funding for remediation in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies to eligible high school students. The P.C.E.N. Summer Program is intended to offer more individualized and intense instruction for students in need of remediation.

During summer 1993, 30,195 students took P.C.E.N.-funded summer-school classes. About two percent of these students were enrolled in Project Outreach, a program for high school dropouts resuming their education and other high-risk students. The program met or exceeded each of its evaluation objectives. Overall, 79 percent of P.C.E.N. students with valid data passed at least one course and 54 percent of P.C.E.N. students taking a Regents Competency Test (R.C.T.) passed the test. However, a closer look at these passing rates indicates that the number of students attaining a passing grade fell below 50 percent on the reading (48 percent), mathematics (44 percent), and science (37 percent) R.C.T.s.

Fifty-seven percent of the P.C.E.N.-students in Project Outreach taking an R.C.T. passed the test. The passing rates of Project Outreach students on the reading R.C.T. (66 percent) and the mathematics R.C.T. (63 percent) were considerably higher than the rates of other summer P.C.E.N. students. In addition, all Project Outreach students who took a writing R.C.T. passed the test.

On the basis of this evaluation, OREA offers the following recommendation:

- Special attention should be focused on increasing the percentage of students who pass the R.C.T.s in mathematics, reading, and science.

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This report was prepared by the Office of Educational Research's High School Evaluation Unit (OER/H.S.E.U.) of the New York City Board of Education under the direction of Dr. Lori Mei. Special thanks to Eleanor Zak for supervising the evaluation, and to Barbara Dworkowitz for interpreting the data and writing the report.

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I. INTRODUCTION

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

Pupils with Compensatory Educational Needs (P.C.E.N.) provides New York State funding for remediation in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies to eligible high school students. P.C.E.N. funds regular as well as summer-school courses. The P.C.E.N. Summer Program is intended to offer individualized and intensive instruction for students in need of remediation. This includes students who have failed a Regent Competency Test (R.C.T.) in reading, writing, mathematics, science, or social studies, and/or students who have failed two or more academic subjects required for high school graduation. The P.C.E.N. Summer Program is administered by the office of Summer and Evening High Schools.

The 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program was in session from July 2 through August 13. Twenty-five or fewer students were scheduled for each course. Final exams were held on August 16, and R.C.T.s were given on August 17.

The 1993 Summer Program consisted of three components: (1) students enrolled in a credit-bearing reduced-sized class in a content area (English, E.S.L., mathematics, science, and/or social studies) which they had failed the previous school year; (2) students enrolled in special classes, which focused on the development of competencies in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and/or social studies, because they had failed, or were in danger of failing, a Regents Competency Test in the subject(s); and (3) students in Project Outreach, a program

comprised of high school dropouts resuming their education and other high risk students, all of whom had previously failed two or more courses required for graduation, were overage, and have accumulated too few credits for their age and grade.*

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the P.C.E.N. Summer Program were that:

- seventy percent of all students completing the summer school program, in all P.C.E.N. Summer Programs, will pass at least one P.C.E.N.-funded course in which they are enrolled;
- fifty percent of all students taking a Regents Competency Test (R.C.T.) will pass the examination; and
- fifty percent of all Project Outreach students taking a Regents Competency Test (R.C.T.) will pass the examination.

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*The 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program proposal identified Offsite Educational Services (O.E.S.), an alternative educational program comprised of sites located throughout the city, as a fourth component. However, O.E.S. did not receive P.C.E.N. funding and therefore did not participate in the 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program.

**Two additional objectives stated in the 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program proposal, but not included here were: (1) 50 percent of all Project Outreach students completing independent study will pass the course, and (2) 50 percent of all O.E.S. students taking an R.C.T. will pass the examination. Data were not available on students in Project Outreach who took or passed independent study courses, so that OREA was unable to determine whether Project Outreach met this objective. The objective pertaining to O.E.S. was not applicable since O.E.S. students did not participate in the 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The purpose of the evaluation by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) was to document whether students enrolled in the 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program met the program objectives in terms of the number and percent of courses passed and the number and percent of R.C.T.s passed.

Program staff specified the Basic Educational Data System (BEDS) code, level, section, period, class title, and class teachers for each P.C.E.N.-funded course. These data were then used by the University Applications Processing Center (U.A.P.C.)* to generate class rosters and grades for each student. OREA then matched these data to New York City public schools' centralized database to obtain R.C.T. scores.

SCOPE OF THIS REPORT

This report summarizes credit and R.C.T. information for participants in the 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program and concludes by offering a recommendation on program modification.

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*U.A.P.C. is an independent computer processing agency which provides scheduling for schools in addition to compiling course grade and credit accumulation information for New York public high school.

II. OUTCOMES

During the 1993 summer term, a total of 93,951 students took courses. About one-third (30,195) of these students attended P.C.E.N.-funded classes. Two percent (516) of the P.C.E.N.-funded students were in the Project Outreach program. All P.C.E.N.-funded summer school students, including those in Project Outreach, are the focus of this report.

COURSES PASSED

One of the program's objectives was that 70 percent of all students completing the P.C.E.N. Summer Program would pass at least one P.C.E.N.-funded course. Table 1 presents the number and percent of courses passed by students. As shown in this table, 79 percent of students completing P.C.E.N. courses passed at least one course, thus surpassing the evaluation objective.

However, the percentage of students passing more than one course has declined steadily. In 1991 over one-half of the students with data (52 percent) passed two or more courses in P.C.E.N.-funded summer school classes, in 1992 fewer than one-fourth (23 percent) of the students passed two or more courses, and in 1993 only 21 percent passed two or more courses.

R.C.T.S PASSED

Two other program objectives pertained to the percent of students who passed the R.C.T. tests. Table 2 shows the number and percent of all students taking and passing R.C.T.s in

Table 1

Number and Percent[1] of Courses Passed by Students in P.C.E.N.-Funded Courses Summer 1993

Courses Taken	Courses Passed								
	Zero		One		Two		Three		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	Total N
One	5,080	25	15,124	75					20,204
Two	970	11	2,382	26	5,719	63			9,071
Three	121	13	114	12	233	25	452	49	920
Total	6,172	20	17,620	58	5,952	20	464	1	30,195

[1]Percents are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

- Seventy-nine percent of the students passed at least one P.C.E.N.-funded course, thus surpassing the evaluation objective.

Table 2

Number and Percent[a] of Students Passing R.C.T.s
Summer 1993

R.C.T.	Number Taking Test	Number Passing Test	Percent Passing
Reading	449	214	48
Writing	319	261	82
Mathematics	1,491	660	44
Science	1,149	423	37
Social Studies	3,891	2,349	60
Total[b]	7,299	3,907	54

[a]Percents are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

[b]Represents the total number of students taking R.C.T.s which is equivalent to the total number of R.C.T.s taken. Students who took two or three examinations were counted separately for each test.

- Fifty-four percent of the students taking an R.C.T. passed the examination, meeting the program objective.

reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Of the 7,299 scores reported in these subjects, 3,907 (54 percent) were passing grades. This percentage exceeded the program objective of a 50 percent passing rate.

However, only 44 percent of 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program students passed the mathematics R.C.T, down from 47 percent in 1992. Forty-eight percent passed the 1993 reading R.C.T., the same percentage as the previous year, and only 37 percent passed the 1993 science R.C.T. Eighty-two percent of the students did pass the 1993 writing R.C.T., a five percent improvement over the previous year and 60 percent passed the social studies R.C.T.

Table 3 presents the number and percent of Project Outreach students who took and passed R.C.T.s in reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies. Of the 257 scores reported for these three examinations, 57 percent (146) were passing grades, thus exceeding the program objective. In the separate subject areas, all (24) of the writing R.C.T. scores, 66 percent (27) of the reading scores, 63 percent (31) of the mathematics scores, 48 percent (11) of the science scores, and 44 percent (53) of the social studies scores were passing grades.

Table 3

Number and Percent[a] of Project Outreach Students
Passing R.C.T.s Summer 1993

R.C.T.	Number Taking Test	Number Passing Test	Percent Passing
Reading	41	27	66
Writing	24	24	100
Mathematics	49	31	63
Science	23	11	48
Social Studies	120	53	44
Total[b]	257	146	57

[a]Percents are rounded to the nearest whole percent.

[b]Represents the total number of students taking R.C.T.s which is equivalent to the total number of R.C.T.s taken. Students who took two examinations were counted separately for each test.

- Fifty-seven percent of the Project Outreach students taking an R.C.T. passed the examination, exceeding the program objective.

III. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The 1993 P.C.E.N. Summer Program served 30,195 students, almost a third of all students who attended summer high school. The program met or exceeded each of its evaluation objectives. Seventy-nine percent of the students enrolled in P.C.E.N.-funded courses passed at least one course, 54 percent of all the students taking an R.C.T. passed the examination, and 57 percent of the students in Project Outreach taking an R.C.T. passed the test.

The overall percentage of P.C.E.N. students passing a summer school course increased from 70 percent in 1992 to 79 percent in 1993. However, the percentage of students passing more than one course has declined steadily. In 1991 over one-half of the students with data (52 percent) passed two or more courses in P.C.E.N.-funded summer school classes, in 1992 fewer than one-fourth (23 percent) of the students passed two or more courses, and in 1993 only 21 percent passed two or more courses.

While the overall passing rate on the R.C.T.s exceeded the program objective, a closer look at these rates indicate that students fell below 50 percent on the reading (48 percent), mathematics (44 percent), and science (37 percent) R.C.T.s

On the basis of this evaluation, OREA offers the following recommendations:

- Special attention should be focused on increasing the percentage of students who pass the R.C.T.s in mathematics reading, and science.